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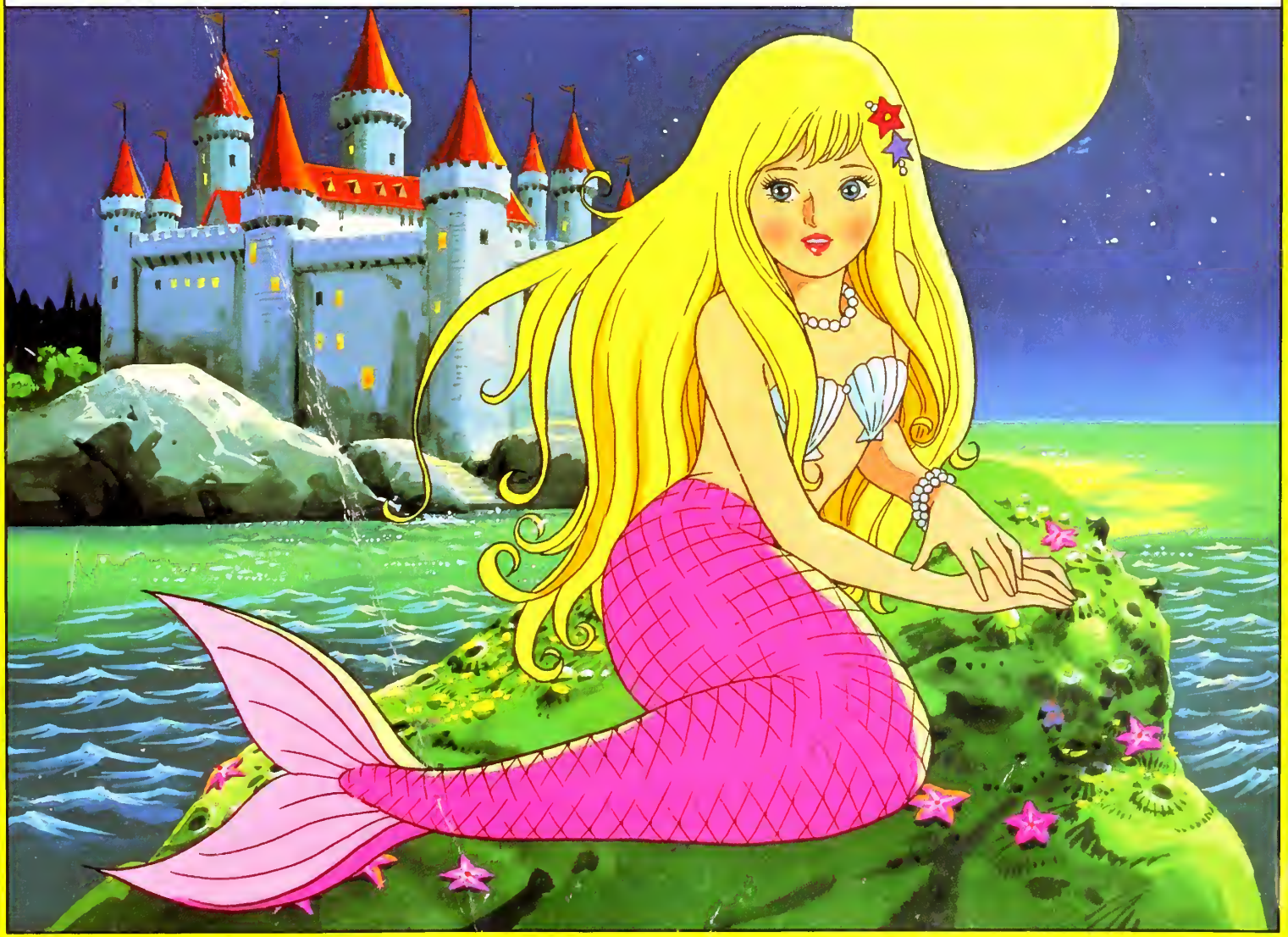
ADAPTED FROM HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN'S

The LITTLE MERMAID



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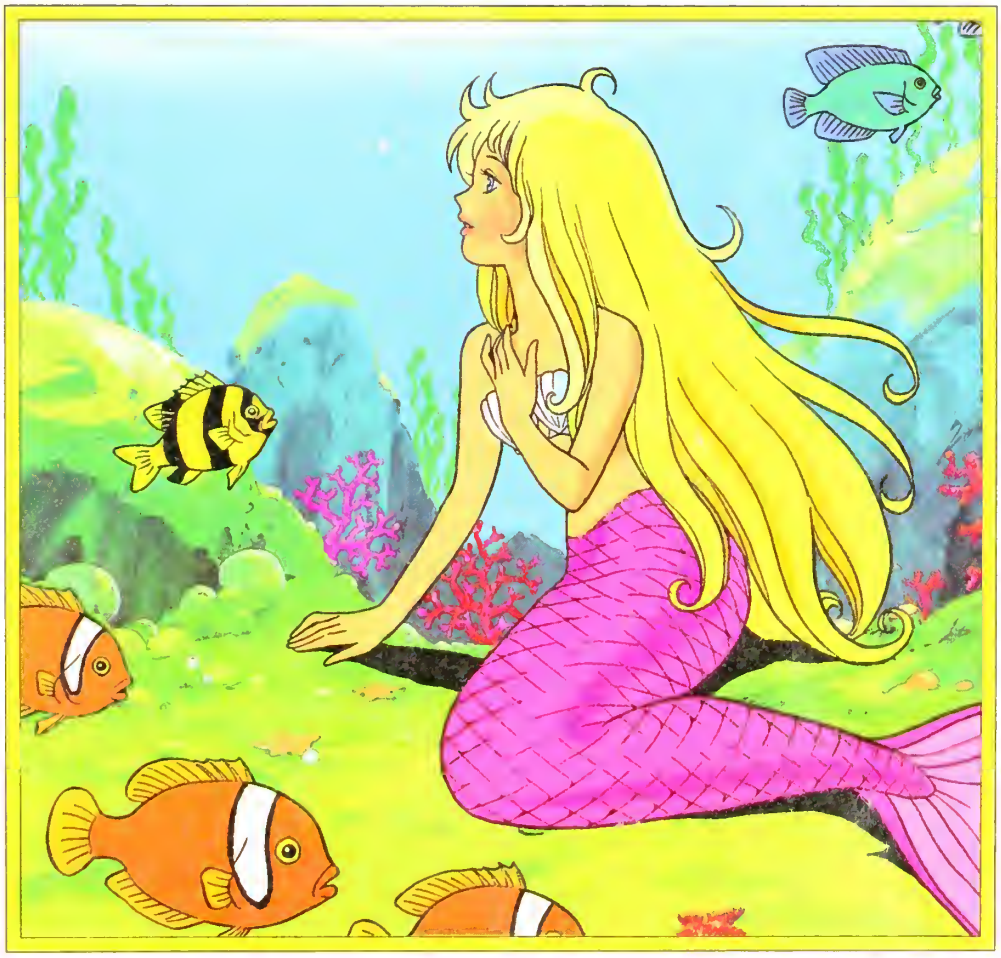

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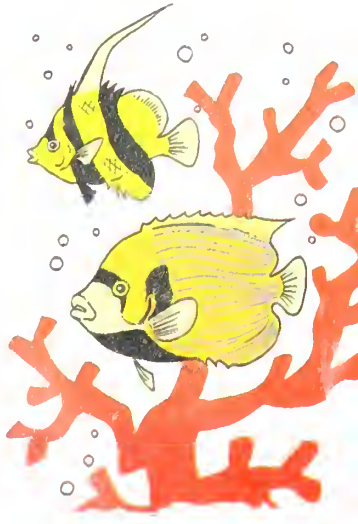
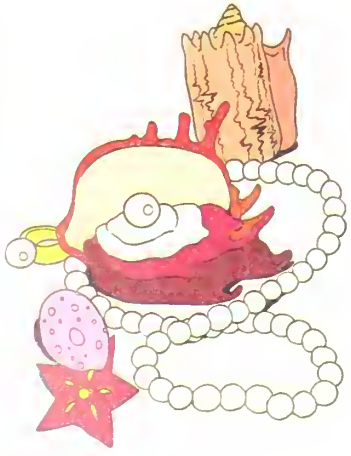
There once was a kingdom that lay deep in the sea. The people who lived there all had tails instead of legs and could swim in the ocean like fish.

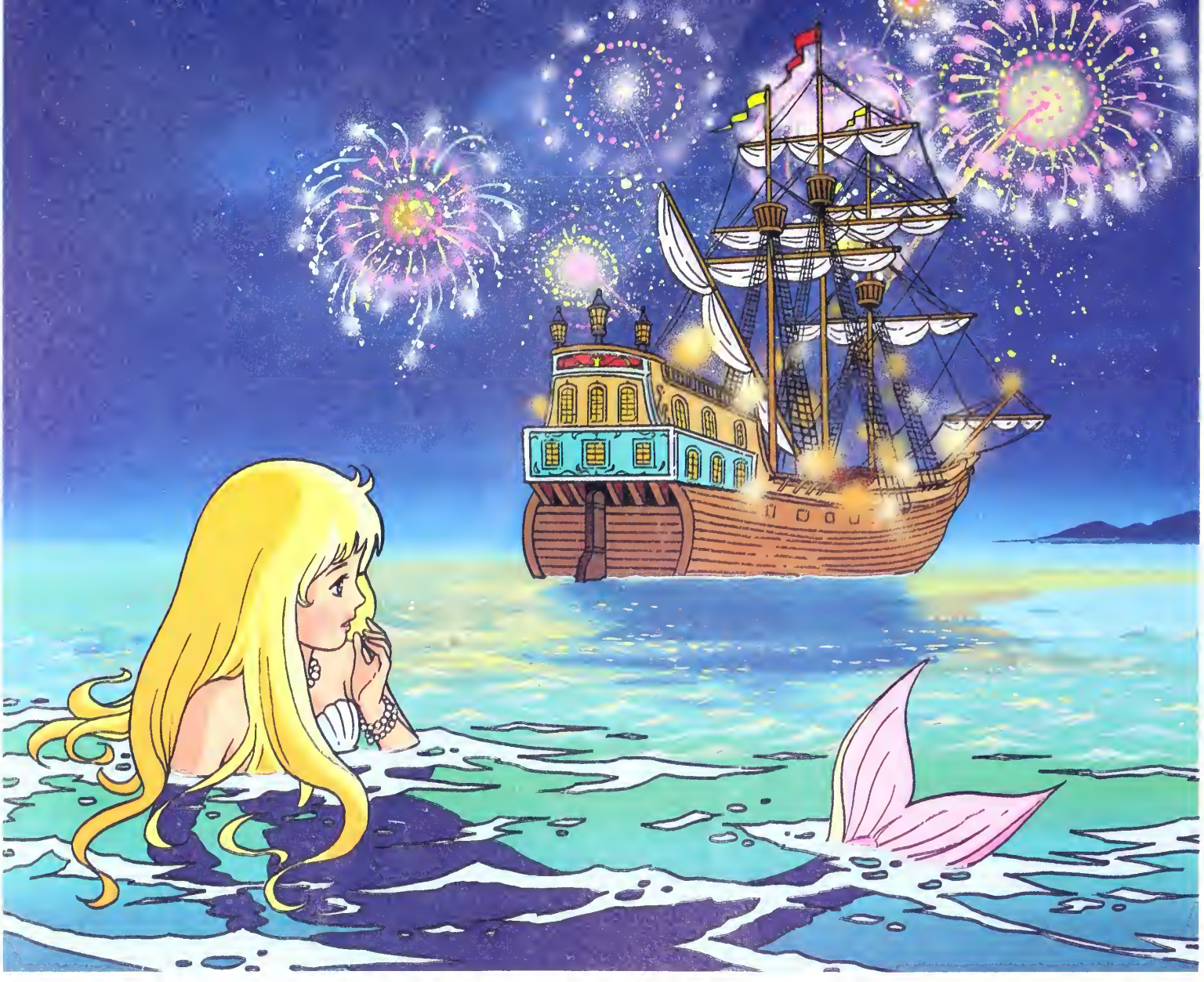
Of all the young mermaids in this kingdom, Pearlie was the youngest and kindest and she had the most beautiful voice in the sea.



Pearlie and her sisters often heard that above the water, there lived people who walked on land. People who didn't have tails, but instead had legs and feet.

Pearlie wanted so much to see this strange sight for herself, that one day, she swam up to take a look.



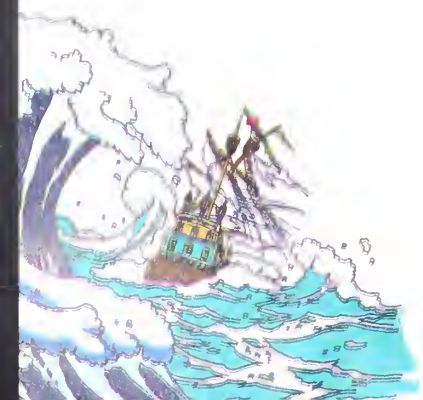


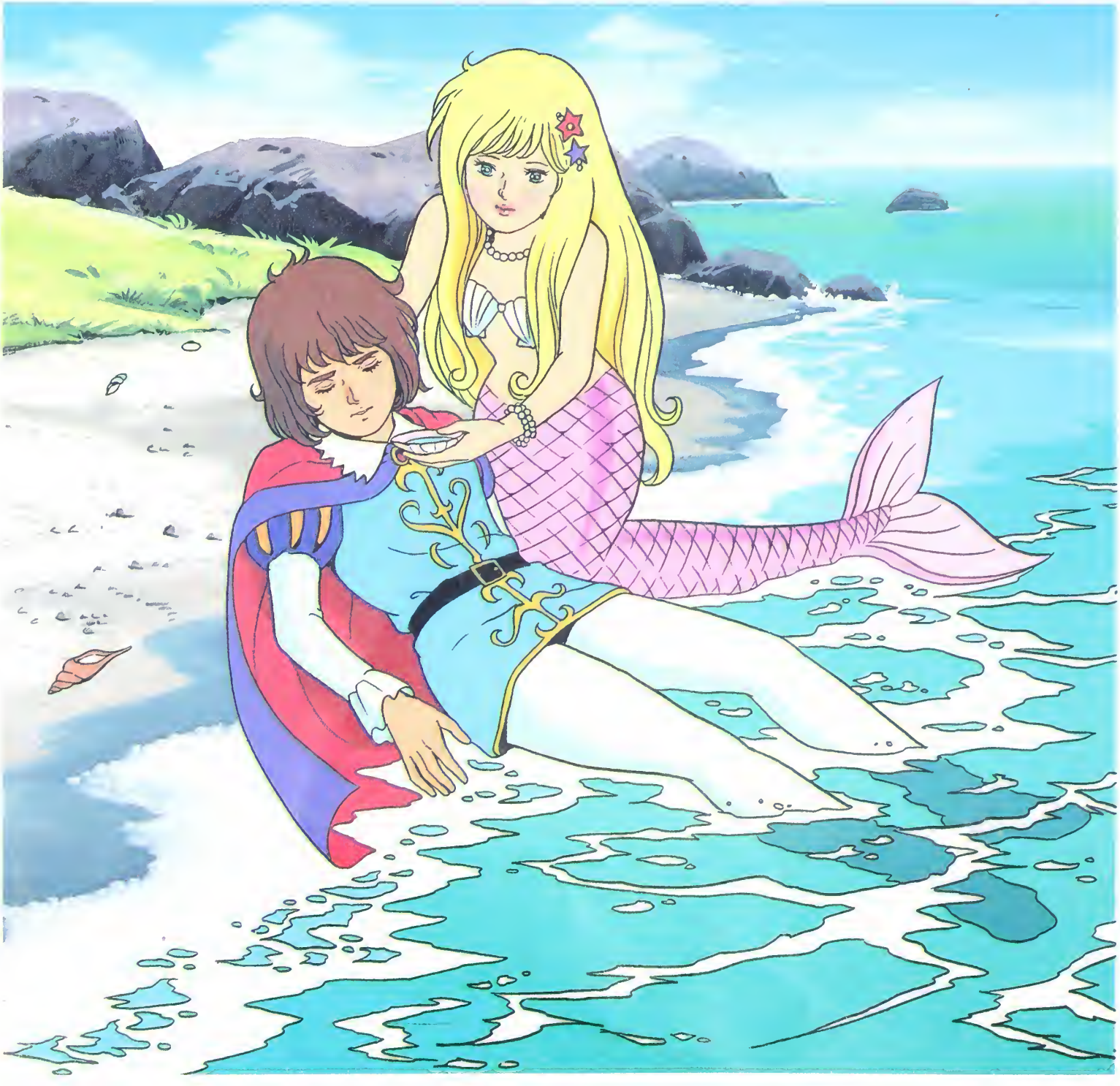
When Pearlie reached the ocean's surface, she saw a sailing ship. The ship's crew was shooting fireworks into the air. Bursts of colored light brightened the night sky. It was wonderful to watch.

More curious than ever, Pearlie swam closer and saw the most handsome young man she could ever have imagined. As Pearlie watched him, her heart began to flutter.

Suddenly, the lights were dimmed by black rain clouds. The night grew dark. Thunder and lightning and rough seas tossed the ship about furiously. An enormous wave crashed over the deck and the young man was swept overboard!

With a push of her powerful tail, Pearlie dove into the deep sea to save the young man from drowning.

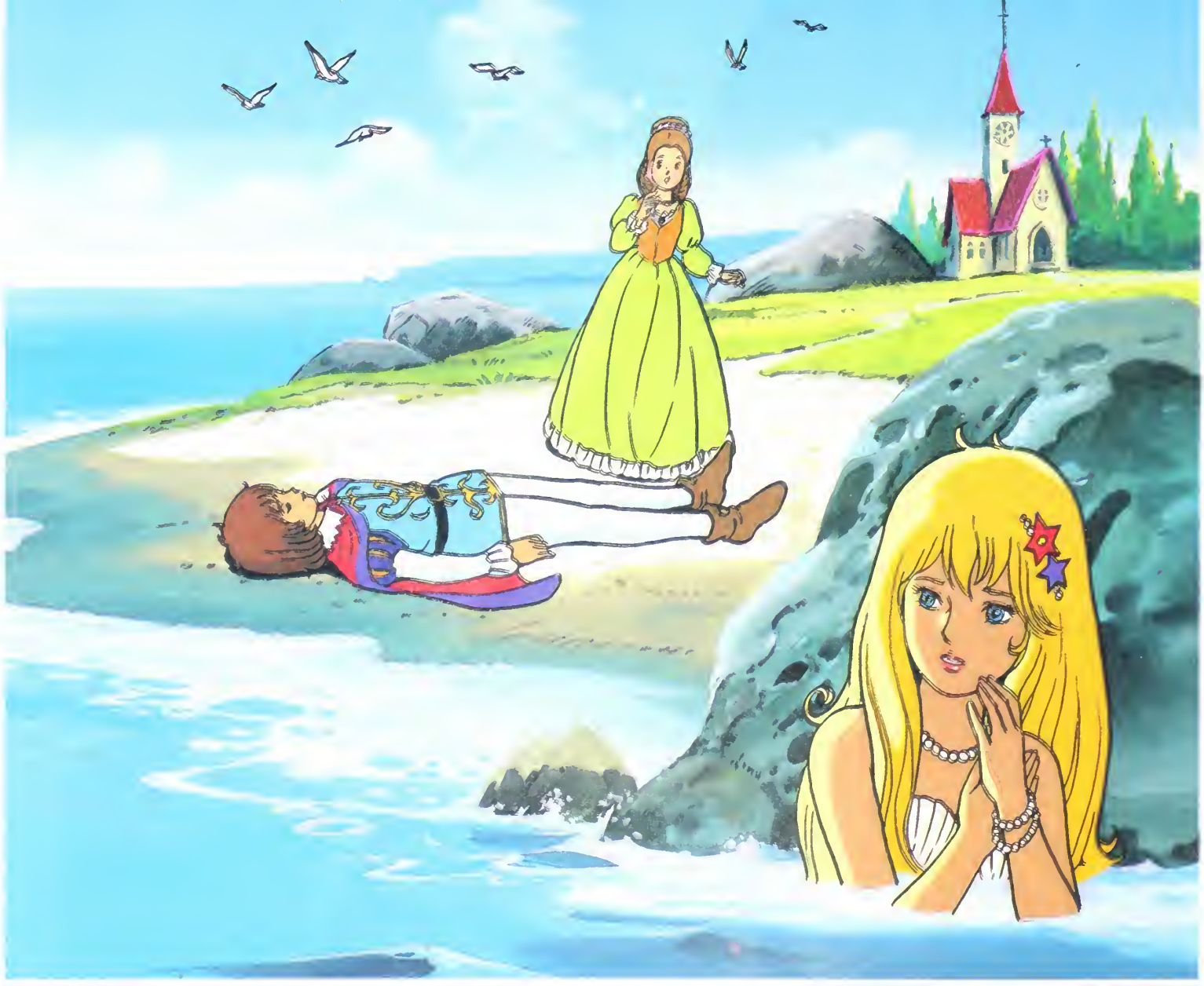




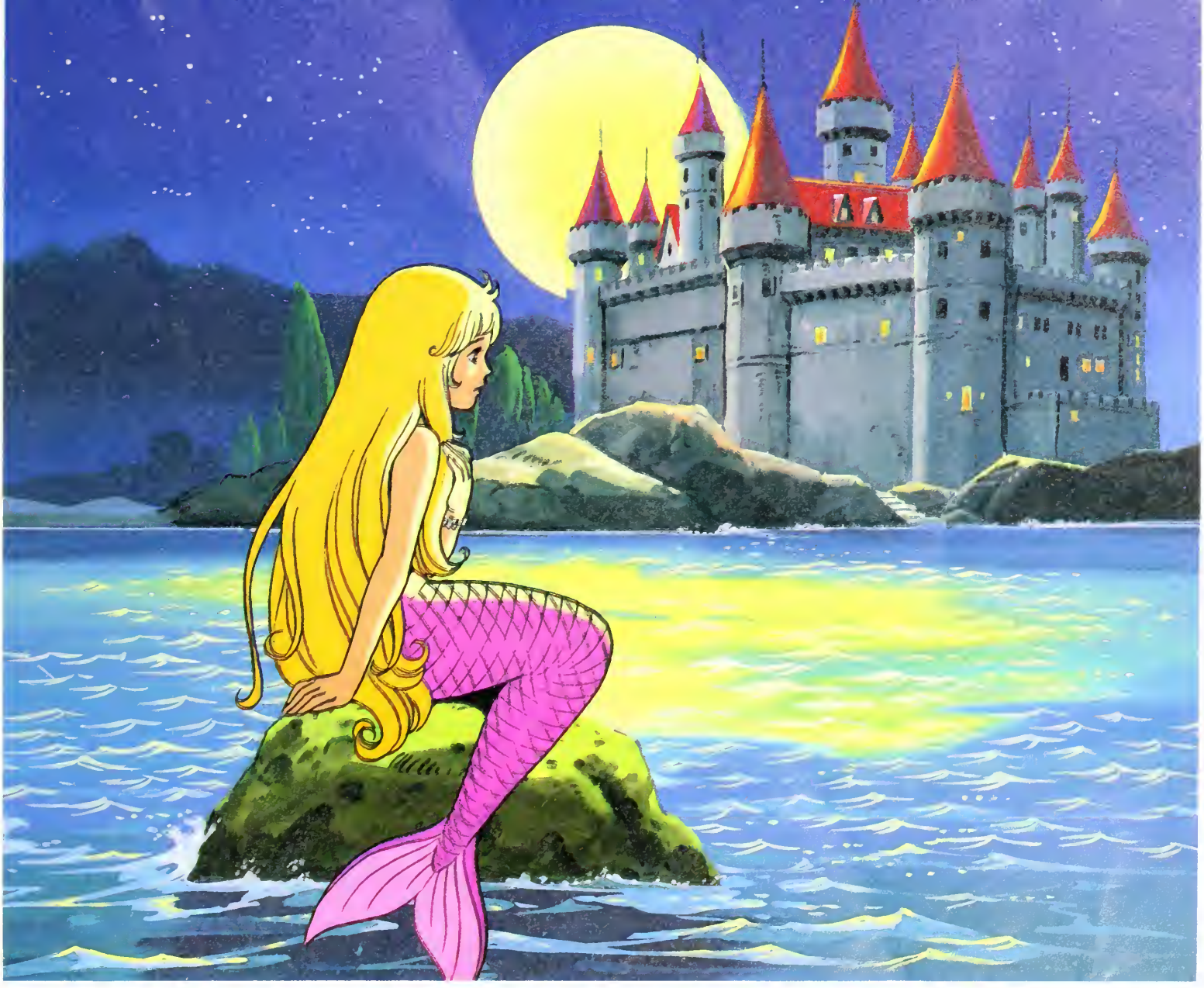
Pearlie caught him and began to swim to shore.

The storm passed quickly. Dawn was breaking when they reached land.

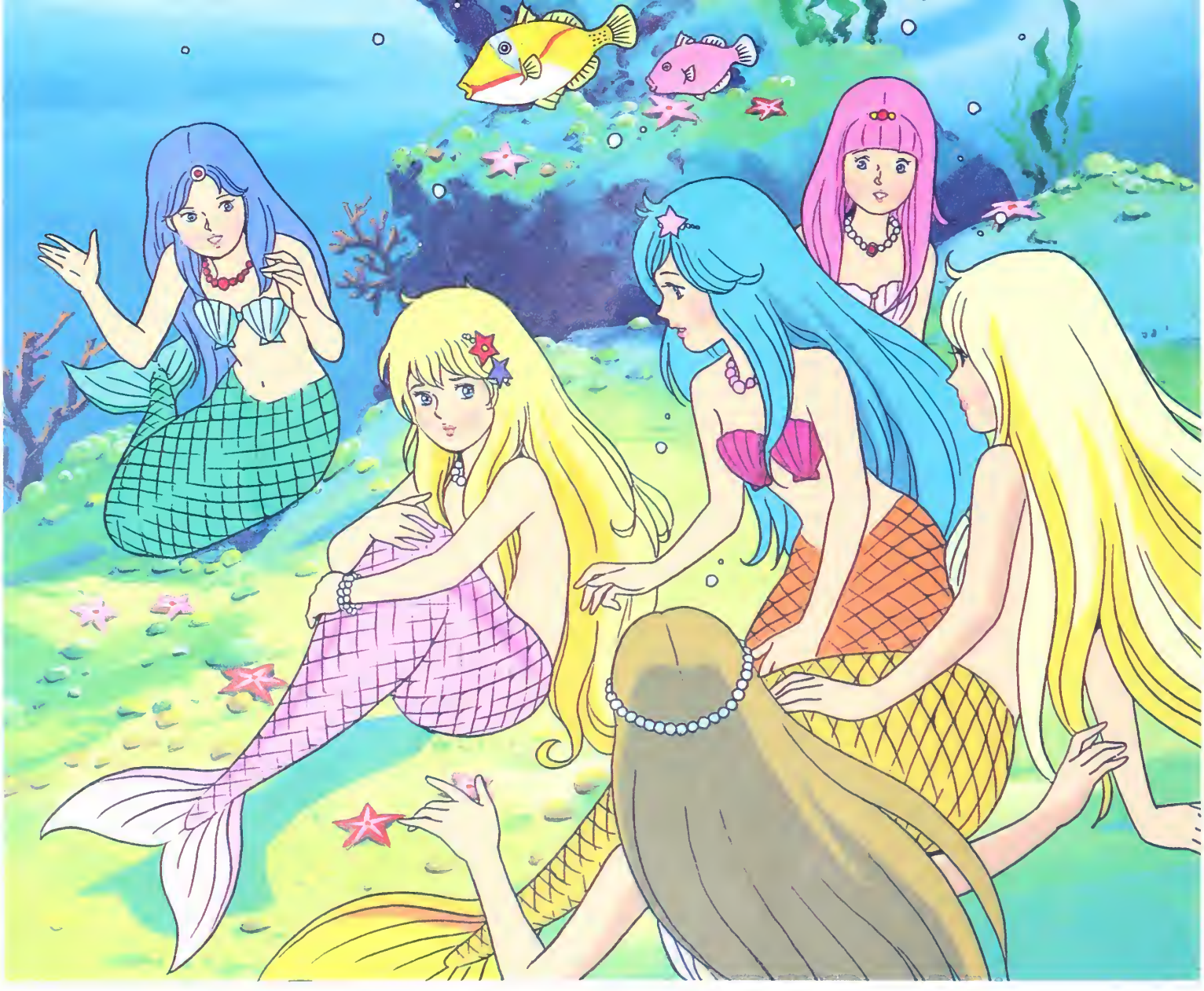
"He must live," sighed Pearlie. As she gazed down at his face, Pearlie knew she was in love.



When the man began to wake, Pearlie slipped back into the water and hid. A young woman ran toward him. Pearlie watched from afar, wishing she had legs and that he would know she had saved him.



Pearlie followed the ship that returned the man home. She would oftentimes watch in the moonlight for a glimpse of her beloved.



When Pearlie returned to the sea kingdom, she told her sisters about the handsome man and her love for him. The mermaids knew only one person who could grant Pearlie's wish to be human — Grimalda, the evil sea hag!

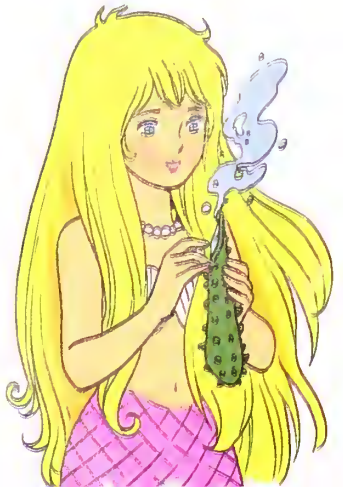
Grimalda's lair was at the deepest, darkest, coldest part of the sea, where monstrous creatures and slimy serpents hid. Pearlie swam quickly.

Pearlie begged the witch to give her legs. "I will give you anything in return," promised Pearlie.

"You must give me your voice," growled Grimalda.

Pearlie trembled, but agreed to the hag's bargain. Somehow, even without a voice, she would be able to make the human understand that she loved him.

"Drink this," Grimalda ordered. She handed Pearlie a shell filled with a foul-smelling potion. After just one sip, Pearlie fell into a deep, enchanted sleep.

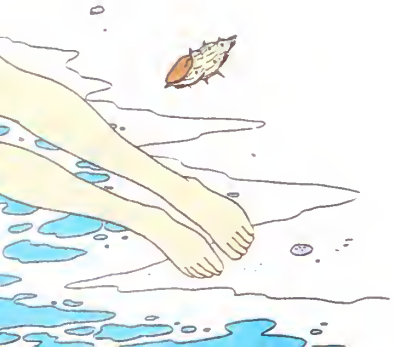


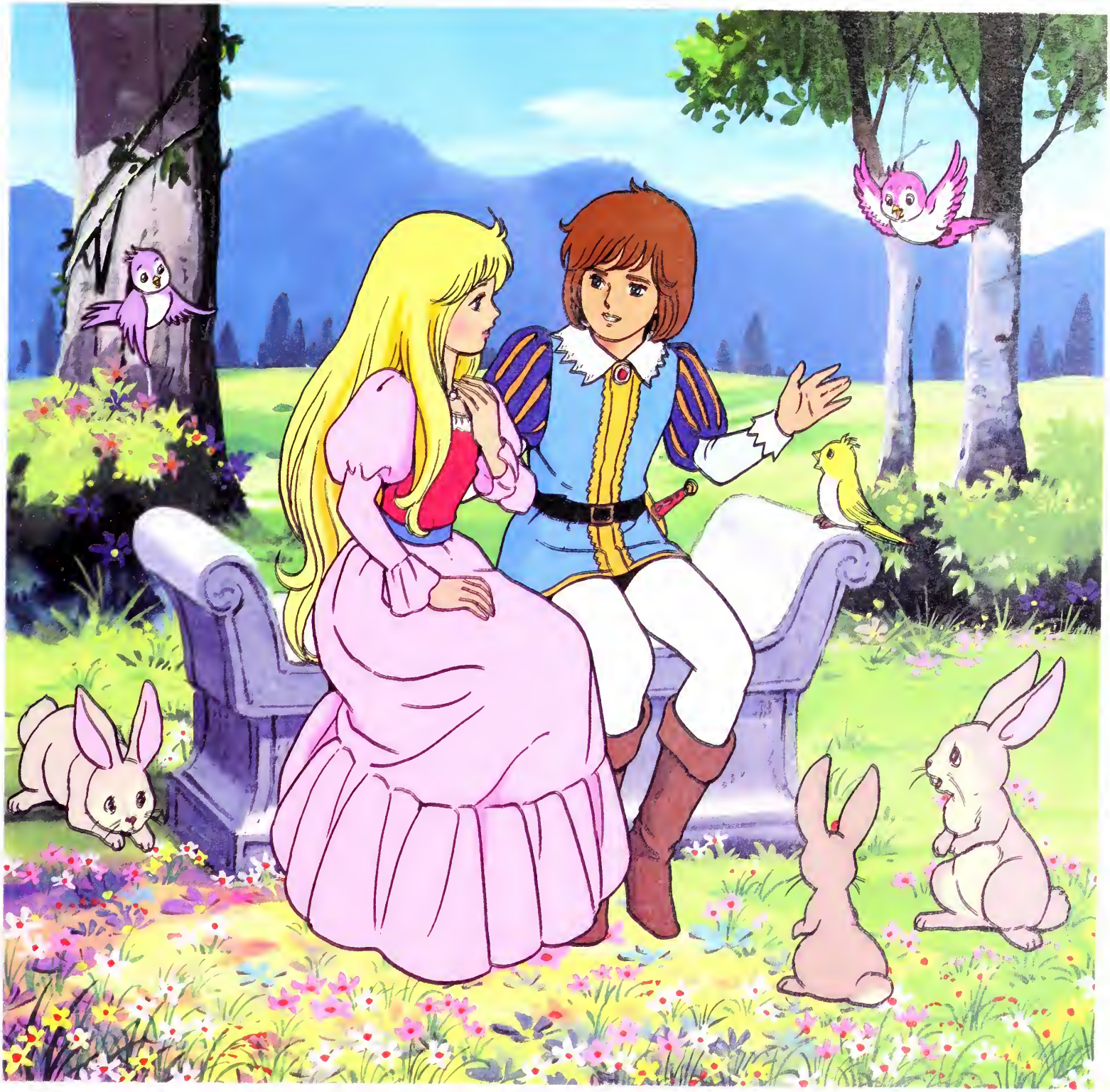
When Pearlie woke, she was on the beach near the castle. She had legs instead of a tail!

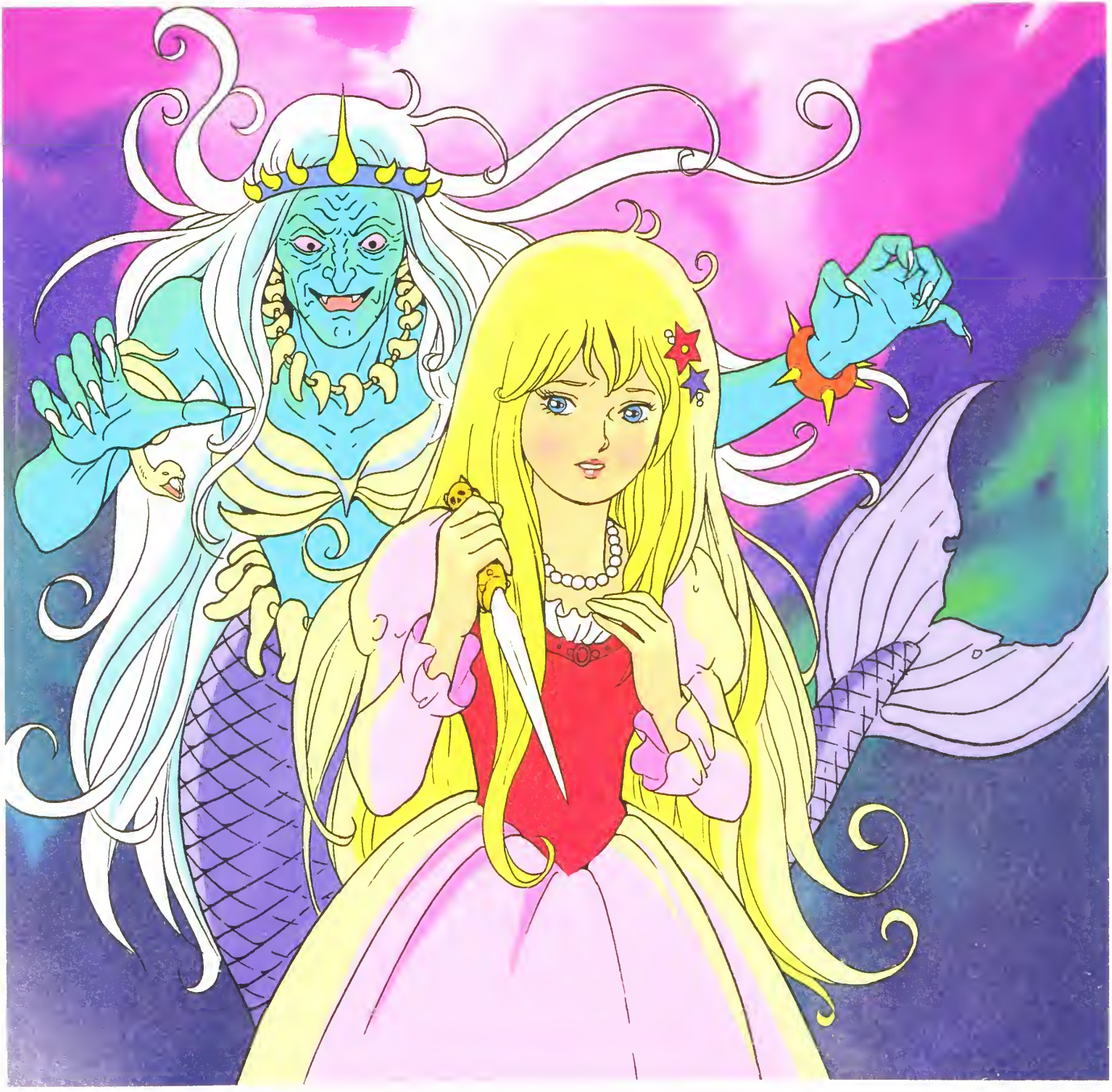
The young man was nearby. "Who are you?" he asked. Pearlie wanted to tell him she had saved him from drowning but she couldn't utter a word.

Taking pity on her, the young man brought her to his castle and spoke to her kindly.

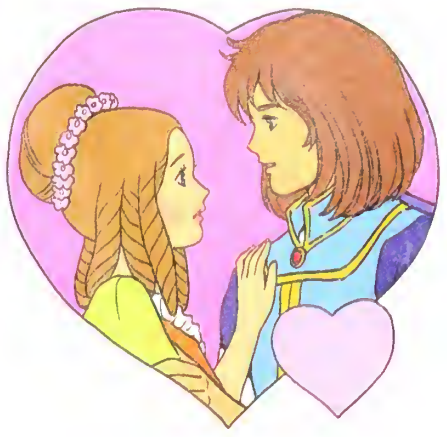
Pearlie soon discovered that he was a prince and that he was soon to be married. Her eyes filled with tears and her heart broke. She would never be able to win his love and could never return to the sea kingdom.





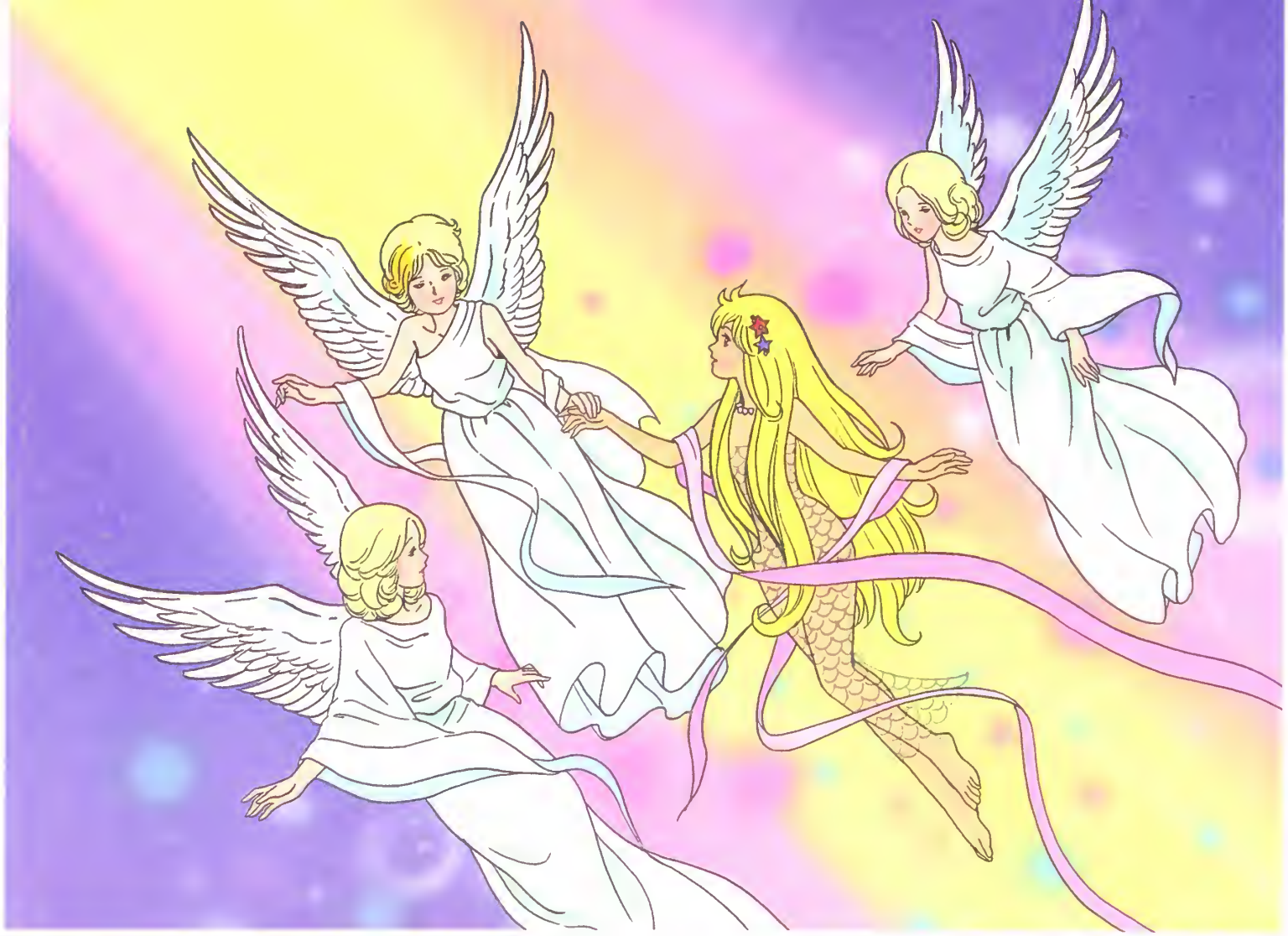


One evening, Grimalda appeared. "So he loves another," she crowed, glad for the mermaid's misery. "I'm willing to give you back your voice and tail," taunted the evil magician. "Just kill the prince while he sleeps. Then you can return to the sea."



Pearlie took the dagger and walked toward the sleeping prince. As she reached him, she silently shouted "No!" and ran off.

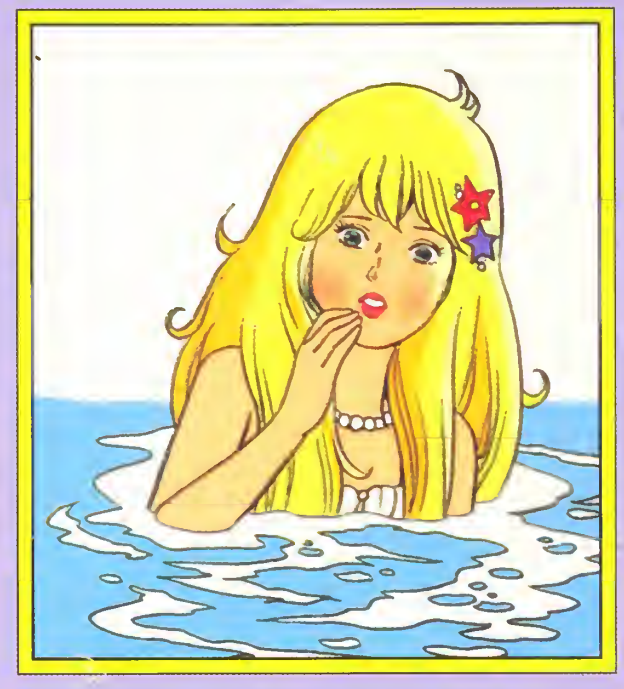
Blinded by tears, Pearlie fell overboard into the sea. Without her tail, Pearlie couldn't swim. She sank deeper and deeper into the darkening ocean.



All at once, the black sea was filled with sparkling light and three beautiful winged creatures appeared beside Pearlie lifting her out of the water.

"By sparing the prince, you have earned a place with us," said one of the lovely creatures.

Pearlie's heart filled with joy and with a smile, Pearlie flew off with her new friends into the light.



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